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FM AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
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C O N F I D E N T I A L THE HAGUE 000305

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STATE FOR EUR/RPM, EUR/SCE, EUR/WE

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TAGS: PREL NATO PGOV MK GR NL

SUBJECT: NETHERLANDS: KEEPING A LOW PROFILE ON GREEK
OPPOSITION TO MACEDONIAN NATO INVITATION

REF: STATE 32646

Classified By: Political-Military Officer Jason Grubb, reasons 1.4 (b,d)
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¶1. (C) Summary: The GONL fully endorses reftel points regarding the need to support UN-led negotiations to resolve the differences over Macedonia's name, and believes such differences should not prevent Macedonia from receiving an invitation at the NATO Bucharest Summit. Yet according to MFA Senior Advisor for the Western Balkans Ferdinand Francken, FM Verhagen will "keep a low profile" on the name issue during the summit in exchange for possible Greek support for the Dutch position on Serbia and ICTY conditionality. Francken discussed these issues with polmiloff on April 1. End summary.

¶2. (C) Francken said the Dutch agree the differences between Macedonia and Greece over Macedonia's name are bilateral in nature, and should not prevent Macedonia from receiving a NATO invitation during the summit. In his personal opinion, Francken said the Greek position amounts to "blackmail" -- at the very least, the name issue should not be used as an excuse to reject Macedonia at Bucharest. He asserted that Greece should agree to the provisional designation of the "Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia" -- as admitted to the UN -- provided UN-led negotiations continue after the summit.

¶3. (C) Francken argued the Dutch had been until recently one of the more vocal members of the EU stressing the need for both sides to reach a compromise. That said, he acknowledged continued Dutch isolation regarding their position on Serbia and ICTY conditionality. Francken said FM Verhagen decided -- following a recent phone call to his Greek counterpart -- to "keep a low profile" at Bucharest on the name issue and allow other NATO members to "carry the water" on pressuring Greece. Francken said the Dutch hoped such leniency might lead to greater Greek flexibility regarding the Dutch position on Serbia.

Gallagher